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that of Zola's novel, "L'CEuvre," that it seems certain the author must have met the unfortunate painter, and have blended his life with that of Cezanne and others when preparing his study on the art-world of Paris.¹

It was undoubtedly because Zola found himself thrown so much among the young painters of the new school that he asked Villemessant to let him write some critical articles on the Salon of 1866, a request which the editor of "L'Evenement" seems to have granted readily enough. It is a curious circumstance that scores of prominent French authors, including famous poets, historians, novelists, and playwrights, have written on one or another Salon at some period of their careers. It used to be said in Paris, half in jest, half in earnest, that nobody could aspire to literary fame of any kind without having criticised at least one of the annual fine-art shows in the Champs Elyse'es. In any case the admission of "non-professionals," so to say, among the critics, has been beneficial" with respect both to the quality of art and the diffusion of artistic perception in Prance. It has more than once led painting out of the beaten track, checked the pontiffs of narrow formulas, encouraged the young, helped on the new schools. At times

the professional art critic has found his harsh
dogmas and
slavish traditions shattered by the common
sense of his
non-professional rival. In England it happens
far too often
that the same men write on art in the same
jargon and in
the same newspapers and periodicals for
years and years.
In the long run, they fail to interest their
readers: they

¹ The above passage corrects and supplements the
particulars given by the
writer in the preface to the English translation of
"L'CEuvre," edited by
him. "His Masterpiece," by E. Zola, London, Ohatto and
Windua, 1902.